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Security Council

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Letter dated 2 March 2012 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith a report on the work of the Security Council during the presidency of South Africa in January 2012 (see annex).

The document was prepared under my responsibility, after consultation with the other members of the Security Council.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Baso **Sangqu**
Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Africa

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President of the Council write a letter to the Secretary-General, invoking a memorandum of understanding signed between the United Nations and NATO, in which the Council should request that the Organization investigate the allegations of civilian casualties. Several views were expressed on the matter by Council members. Some were in favour of and others against the need for such an investigation as proposed, while recognizing that two simultaneous investigative processes were under way to address the matter of human rights violations in Libya.

The monthly briefing in the Council on the developments in Libya, pursuant to resolution 1973 (2011), was held on 25 January. Council members received briefings from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Ian Martin, and from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navanethem Pillay. The Permanent Representative of Libya to the United Nations, Abdurrahaman Shalgham, also delivered a statement.

The Special Representative informed the Council of the various challenges encountered by the interim Government of Libya, which had been in place for approximately two months, as it steered the country during the transitional phase. The status of mission agreement was signed on 10 January 2012 by the Libyan Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the Special Representative. The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) was also finalizing, in consultation with the Libyan authorities, the integrated mission planning process regarding the role of the Mission beyond its current mandate, which would be reflected in the report of the Secretary-General at the end of February 2012.

The High Commissioner briefed the Council on the human rights situation in Libya. She indicated that some positive measures had been taken by the Libyan authorities. The commitment of the Government of Libya to human rights was acknowledged as well as the sense of urgency paid to human rights in addressing their legal framework. At the same time, various human rights challenges confronted the Government. The High Commissioner also called on all sides to the conflict, as well as NATO, to cooperate fully with the International Commission of Inquiry on Libya of the Human Rights Council in the final phase of its investigations. The Commission would present its final report to the members of the Human Rights Council on 9 March 2012.

The Permanent Representative of Libya underlined his Government's commitment to distance itself from the practices of the former regime of Colonel Muammar Qaddafi. He stated that the new Government of Libya would not make the same mistakes of the past nor hide mistakes that might have been made recently. He highlighted the gravity of crimes committed by the Qaddafi regime and shared the gratitude of the Libyan people for the Council's authorization to protect civilians, which he stated had saved countless lives. He noted that the new Government rejected political and social exclusion and was committed to the rule of law. In that regard, the Government would subject to the due process of law those who had stolen from the Libyan people as well as those whose hands were bloodied. National reconciliation was highlighted as an important mechanism for Libya to pursue. African countries such as South Africa and Morocco provided good examples to Libya of how national reconciliation could be achieved. The Permanent

Representative also informed the Council of the Islamic character of the Libyan State and its peoples, which the international community must recognize and accept.

The Members of the Council recognized the challenges facing the Government of Libya; conveyed several views on the areas that they considered important and that required Council attention to assist Libya achieve a smooth transition from conflict; and noted the progress already made in preparing for elections. Several members of the Council also addressed the forthcoming expiration of the mandate of UNSMIL, underscoring the need for the mandate to be renewed for a period greater than three months in order to make a substantive contribution to the reconstruction of the Libyan State.

In relation to the above-mentioned request to investigate civilian casualties in Libya, one representative made two specific proposals. The first proposal was a request that the President of the Council ask the Secretary-General to call on NATO to conduct an investigation into its implementation of resolution 1973 (2011), in line with the provisions of a memorandum of understanding signed between the United Nations and NATO. The second proposal was a request to have a NATO official brief the Council on its implementation of resolution 1973 (2011). Some members of the Council expressed their support for the proposals, while others were opposed to them.

South Sudan

On 5 January, the Council held consultations on the situation in South Sudan. The Council was briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hervé Ladsous, on the intercommunal fighting in Jonglei State. The Council was informed that there had been clashes between the Lou Nuer and Murle tribes which had left several dozens of people killed and hundreds displaced. During the clashes, cattle raiding and the burning of *tukuls* (huts) occurred. Serious concerns were also raised in respect of retaliation attacks by the Murle tribe. It was highlighted that there is a need for long-term reconciliation processes within South Sudan and also an urgent need for the Government of South Sudan to exercise its primary responsibility to protect the civilian population. Council members welcomed the efforts of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to assist the Government of South Sudan in protecting civilians and addressing the root causes of the conflict. Some members also were of the view that there is a need to address disarmament, demobilization and reintegration issues and the proliferation of small arms exacerbating the conflict.

Following the briefing, on 9 January the Council issued a statement to the press, in which it expressed deep concern at the reports of casualties in Jonglei State. The members of the Council deplored the loss of life and livelihood of persons affected by the violence, and emphasized the primary responsibility of the Government of South Sudan to protect its population, in particular the most vulnerable groups such as women and children. The members of the Council underscored that violence in any form was unacceptable, and they called on all communities in Jonglei State immediately to end the cycle of conflict and engage in a reconciliatory peace process. The members of the Council welcomed the efforts of the Government of South Sudan to mediate a solution to the crisis and protect civilians.

African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

On 11 January, the Council received a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations. The Permanent Representative of the Sudan, Ali Osman, and Chargé d'affaires, a.i., of South Sudan, David Choat, made statements during the briefing.

The Under-Secretary-General highlighted that the security situation in Darfur had recently deteriorated, particularly in Zam Zam camp (North Darfur). He indicated that there was an urgent need for unhindered access for the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), in order for its mandate to be effectively implemented. Some progress has been made in the implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. This includes consultations with stakeholders and the appointment of the members of the Ceasefire Commission, which met four times during the reporting period. The Under-Secretary-General further reported that the Secretary-General had proposed a road map to assist in the consolidation of cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations in the implementation of the Doha Document. Additionally, the road map will develop the modalities for a tailored engagement with all non-signatory armed movements and prepare for an internal dialogue among the Darfuris.

With regard to the humanitarian situation, the Under-Secretary-General reported that the situation remained dire; however some encouraging progress had been observed, as some people were returning to their homes, at an average of 150 people a month.

Council members expressed support for the full implementation of the Doha Document for Peace, and called on armed movements outside the process to sign the agreement. Council members expressed concern about the security and humanitarian situation in Darfur.

On 17 January, the Council heard a briefing by Valerie Amos, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, on her recent visit to the Sudan. The Council was also briefed via videoteleconference by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres. The briefings focused on the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states of the Sudan.

A key issue emanating from the briefings was that the humanitarian situation in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile has gravely deteriorated since the conflict began six months ago in the two regions. Of greater concern, however, is the restricted access for humanitarian agencies in providing humanitarian relief in those areas, which has negatively impacted food security for the population in those areas as well agricultural production. Nevertheless, the Under-Secretary-General highlighted that during her visit to the Sudan, the Government had committed to allowing some international agencies to conduct humanitarian work.

Council members generally expressed concern at the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Sudan and deplored the lack of access for international humanitarian personnel.

On 23 January, the Council issued a press statement condemning the attack on a UNAMID patrol in Darfur, which occurred on 21 January, in which one Nigerian peacekeeper was killed and three were wounded.

The members of the Council expressed their condolences to the family of the peacekeeper killed in the attack, and to the Government of Nigeria. They called on the Government of the Sudan to bring the perpetrators to justice, and stressed that there must be an end to impunity for those who attack peacekeepers.

On 30 January, the Council met in closed consultations to receive a briefing from the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Edmund Mulet, regarding the troop levels of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan. The briefing was held pursuant to resolution 1996 (2011), in which the Council authorized the deployment of up to 7,000 military personnel, and decided to review in three and six months whether the conditions on the ground could allow a reduction to a level of 6,000.

During the briefing the Assistant Secretary-General indicated that the current troop levels were at approximately 4,975. In view of the prevailing security and humanitarian threats in South Sudan, he relayed the Secretary-General's view that the troop level of 7,000 was required and should not be reduced to 6,000. The troop numbers could be reassessed again in 12 months. Council members agreed to maintain the strength levels at 7,000, given the insecurity on the ground, particularly in Jonglei State.

Somalia

On 11 January, the Council heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, and Ramtane Lamamra, Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, on the situation in Somalia, including a briefing on the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). The Council also heard statements from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kenya, Moses Wetang'ula, and the Minister of Defence of Uganda, Crispus Kiyonga. The Under-Secretary-General updated the Council on recent political, humanitarian and security developments. The Commissioner briefed the Council on the revised strategic concept for AMISOM that was endorsed by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. In addition to hearing statements by members of the Council, the Council also heard a statement by the representative of Burundi.

Following the debate, the members of the Security Council agreed on a statement to the press in which they reiterated their full support to AMISOM and stressed the importance of predictable, reliable and timely resources to the Mission. They noted the recommendations on Somalia of 5 January 2012 by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and the intention of the Secretary-General to submit a report. They underlined their intention to keep the situation under review. The members of the Council also stressed the importance of international assistance to develop the Somali security forces. The members of the Council commended the unity of purpose demonstrated at the recent Somali National Consultative Constitutional Conference, held in Garowe, Somalia, and encouraged inclusive and representative dialogue with the Somali people on the constitution. They noted that future support to the transitional federal institutions would be contingent on completion of these tasks and noted the Secretary-General's view that further extension of the road map would be untenable.

United Nations Office for West Africa

On 16 January, the Security Council heard a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa, Said Djinnit, and met in closed consultations to consider the six-month report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa (S/2011/811).

The Special Representative noted that a cessation of open conflict and tensions tied to political unrest had in some countries resulted in credible elections. However, he informed the members of the Council that progress in the region remained tenuous. He called on the international community to remain wary as the situation remained fragile. He informed the Council that the countries in the region remained vulnerable, which could jeopardize peacebuilding, democracy and stability. He reported on the recent developments in Nigeria, which had been a regional pillar and had contributed to peace and stability in the region. Recently though, terrorist attacks had endangered peace and security there. The Special Representative stressed that political dialogue and national reconciliation in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Togo would be important in ensuring that progress in the subregion would be lasting. In respect of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, he reported that some countries in the region, such as Benin, did not have adequate capacity and resources to fight piracy in the region. In that regard, he called upon the international community to support the current regional efforts to fight piracy. In regard to the humanitarian situation and the impact of the crisis in Libya on the Sahel region, he indicated that the impact of the Libyan crisis remained a concern for the stability of the region and that it had aggravated the fragile structures of West Africa, particularly in the Sahel region.

The Special Representative reported that drug trafficking and organized crime continued to undermine State institutions. He called for increased political mobilization and cooperation in originating, transit and destination countries. He stressed that the Office remained committed to providing an effective response, in cooperation with ECOWAS and subregional organizations. The Special Representative stated that election-related violence continued to be the source of conflict and political instability in the region. He reported that several countries in the region would be holding elections in 2012. Furthermore, he encouraged the countries in the region to abide by the Praia Declaration on Elections and Stability in West Africa. Lastly, he informed the members of the Council that in the upcoming months the Office would mobilize regional and subregional organizations to solidify progress and prevent conflicts that could undermine steps towards peace, democracy and development in the subregion.

In consultations that followed the briefing, Council members expressed their support for the Office and the Special Representative's continued cooperation and engagement with the countries of the region, subregional and regional organizations, and other United Nations bodies to accomplish the Office's mandate.

Côte d'Ivoire

On 26 January, the Council heard a briefing, followed by closed consultations to consider the six-month report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI). The Council was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire, Albert

Koenders. The Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations, Youssoufou Bamba, also briefed the Council.

The Special Representative's briefing focused on the progress achieved by the Government of Côte d'Ivoire towards the restoration of normalcy since the end of the presidential election crisis. He reported that the security situation was stabilizing around the country, that the internally displaced persons had started to return, and that the legislative elections were held successfully. He stated that despite those positive developments, important challenges still remained around the country. Furthermore, he stated that the country continued to struggle to recover from the devastating crisis, which had destroyed its capacity to deal with those challenges. The Special Representative highlighted that the root causes of instability and potential triggers of violence remained in the country. He stressed that the challenges and issues relating to security and national reconciliation should not be underestimated and required the political attention of the Council.

The Special Representative reported that the priorities identified by President Alassane Ouattara and the areas to which the United Nations is mandated to provide support remained valid to assist the Government in stabilizing the security situation around the country. Those priorities include security sector reform, reform of security and rule of law institutions, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants and the protection of civilians. With regard to the certification of the legislative elections held in December 2011, the Special Representative stated that he would certify all stages of elections after the national institutions evaluated the process. He stressed that since the legislative elections had taken place, the Council should focus its attention on other priority areas, such as national reconciliation, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, security sector reform and consolidation of the security situation, especially in Abidjan and the west of the country.

During closed consultations, members of the Council welcomed the progress achieved in Côte d'Ivoire and noted the challenges that remain. The members of the Council welcomed the measures taken by the Government to address security-related challenges and, in that regard, called upon the international community to provide assistance to the Government. Furthermore, Council members encouraged UNOCI to continue to support the Government with its disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform programmes to achieve stability and peace. They also welcomed the role of UNOCI during the legislative elections.

Peace and security in Africa

On 26 January, the Under-Secretary-General for the Department of Political Affairs briefed the Council on the report of the assessment mission on the impact of the Libyan crisis on the Sahel region (S/2012/42). The President, with the consent of the Council, invited the representatives of Chad, Mali and Niger, at their request, to participate in the meeting.

The Under-Secretary-General's briefing focused on the impact of the Libyan crisis on the Sahel region. He emphasized the structural problems in the Sahel region, which were already in existence prior to the crisis in Libya. He briefed Council members on the myriad of challenges in the region, which included the exodus of migrant workers from Libya and the proliferation of arms from Libya, and which exacerbated such existing problems as terrorist activities by Al-Qaida in the

Maghreb, illicit drug trafficking and organized crime. The region was also beset with an ongoing food crisis and suffered from a general lack of development. Countries of the region impressed upon the assessment mission the urgent need to deal with terrorist activities and socioeconomic challenges, and to develop a comprehensive strategy to address the smuggling of drugs and weapons.

Following the briefing, on 31 January, the members of the Council issued a statement to the press, in which they welcomed the collaborative efforts of the United Nations and the African Union, as well as the close consultations conducted by the mission with the States concerned to identify their needs. The members of the Council expressed their concern about the security and humanitarian situation in the Sahel region and the impact of the Libyan crisis. They expressed their willingness to follow the situation in the Sahel region.

Europe

Cyprus

On 25 January, the Council was briefed in closed consultations by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus, Alexander Downer, on the latest round of talks facilitated by the United Nations between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders, which was held at Greentree Estate, in Manhasset, New York on 23 and 24 January 2012.

The Special Adviser indicated that the focus of the discussions between the parties was on the core outstanding issues and reported that limited progress was achieved. Council members generally welcomed the discussions and some members expressed concern at the limited progress. Council members were of the view that the parties should work towards convergence on the outstanding core issues.

Middle East

Iraq

On 17 January, the Council convened in closed consultations for briefings on the six-month report of the Secretary-General on the Development Fund for Iraq and a progress report on matters related to weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. The Council was briefed by the Controller, Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts, Maria Eugenia Casar, on the Development Fund for Iraq, and by Gabriele Kraatz-Wadsack, Chief of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Branch, Office for Disarmament Affairs, on issues related to weapons of mass destruction.

In reference to the Fund, the Controller indicated that the Government of Iraq continued to fulfil its obligations pursuant to Security Council resolution 1956 (2010). She informed the Council that although the mandate of the International Advisory and Monitoring Board for Iraq expired in June 2011, there had been no change in the mechanism of payments, and Iraq continued to transfer 5 per cent of its oil proceeds to the United Nations Compensation Fund in a timely manner.

In relation to matters concerning weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, the Chief of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Branch recalled that that the Council's

high-level meeting on Iraq in December 2010 recognized the progress made by Iraq in supporting the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime, and that resolution 1957 (2010) lifted the restrictions placed on Iraq, in relation to weapons of mass destruction and civilian nuclear activities, by resolutions 687 (1991) and 707 (1991). She provided a briefing on the report of the Secretary-General (S/2011/607), which had been submitted to the Council and contained information provided by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

Council members generally welcomed the commitment by the Government of Iraq to complying with resolutions 1956 (2010) and 1957 (2010). Discussions also focused on progress made by Iraq on its commitment to ratify the Additional Protocol to the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and on its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Yemen

On 25 January, the Council met in closed consultations to receive a briefing from Jamal Benomar, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General for Yemen.

The briefing was provided in accordance with resolution 2014 (2011), which requested the Secretary-General to report on implementation of the resolution within 30 days of its adoption and every 60 days thereafter.

The Special Adviser briefed the Council on the current developments in Yemen with regard to the political, security, humanitarian and socioeconomic situation. He informed the Council about the status of the implementation of the political transition, on the basis of the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative, as well as of the implementation mechanism. Members of the Council welcomed the progress being made in those efforts, including the formation of the Government of National Unity and preparations for elections on 21 February. Members expressed concern about the situation in Yemen and called for Yemeni authorities to implement the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative and implementation mechanism in a transparent and timely manner. Among other issues, members were concerned about the presence of Al-Qaida in the South, the continuing violence, the humanitarian crisis and the deteriorating socioeconomic situation, as well as the factions that remained outside of the transition process. Members expressed their appreciation for the role played by the good offices of the Secretary-General through his Special Adviser.

Following the meeting the members of the Council issued a statement to the press in which the Council, inter alia, reiterated that the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative and implementation mechanism must be fulfilled in a transparent and timely manner, and in a spirit of inclusion and reconciliation; urged all the parties in Yemen to reject violence, refrain from provocations, and cooperate with the Military Affairs Committee to fully implement the implementation mechanism and resolution 2014 (2011); and reiterated that all those responsible for human rights violations and abuses, including acts of violence, must be held accountable.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

On 18 January, in closed consultations, the Council received a briefing from the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordination on the humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories under the

agenda item entitled "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question".

The briefing highlighted the humanitarian impact of all settlement activity and the escalation of violence by settlers, as well as the dire humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip.

Some Council members expressed concern at the humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories, especially in the Gaza Strip, and criticized Israeli settlement activities and settler violence. There was also general support for the resumption of direct negotiations between the parties.

On 24 January, the Council held an open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. The Council heard a briefing by the Assistant Secretary-General of the Department of Political Affairs, Oscar Fernandez-Taranco. The Assistant Secretary-General briefed the Council on the latest developments with regard to preparatory talks between Palestinian and Israeli negotiators, specifically the recent meetings between the parties as facilitated by Jordan in coordination with the Quartet. He also informed the Council of the continuing construction of settlements by Israel in the West Bank. He further informed the Council of the developments in the Gaza Strip, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic.

Following the Assistant Secretary-General's briefing, the Permanent Observer of Palestine, and the Permanent Representative of Israel addressed the Council, stating their respective positions. All members of the Council and representatives of 24 non-member States as well as the representative of the European Union made statements.

Many States that participated in the debate expressed their disappointment with the fact that the peace process remained stalled and supported a return by the parties to direct negotiations. Almost all speakers welcomed the initiative of Jordan in coordination with the Quartet, and expressed the hope that this initiative would be the beginning of serious talks between the parties in line with the Quartet's statement of 23 September 2011. Some speakers also expressed their support for the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations. Many States registered their concern at the continuing settlement activity in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem, as well as settler violence. Those States called on Israel to stop this practice, as well as home demolitions, evictions and desecration of Palestinian religious sites, and to prosecute settlers who continue to carry out violence against the Palestinians. Some States condemned the rockets fired from the Gaza Strip into Israel. Some States urged Israel to lift without delay the blockade of the Gaza Strip so as to allow space for economic activity in that area. Some States urged the Palestinians to accelerate their unity efforts. Many States condemned the ongoing violence in the Syrian Arab Republic and called for action by the Council.

Statements were also made on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Non-Aligned Movement, the European Union, the African Group and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

The situation in the Middle East

The Council convened in closed consultations on 27 January to consider a draft resolution on the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. Morocco introduced

the draft resolution and announced the following co-sponsors: Bahrain, Colombia, France, Germany, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Portugal, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. The draft resolution reflected the philosophy expressed in a resolution adopted by the League of Arab States at its meeting in Cairo on 22 January 2012 (see S/2012/71). Members of the Council expressed their deep concern about the ongoing crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic, which included widespread violations of human rights. They welcomed the efforts by the League of Arab States aimed at resolving the crisis. Some members of the Council expressed their full support for the draft resolution, while others had reservations on some of the elements in the resolution.

The Council met on 31 January to hear a briefing by Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al Thani, the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar and Nabil Elaraby, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, who presented the League of Arab States decision of 22 January on the Syrian Arab Republic and requested the Council to support the initiative contained therein. They indicated to the Council that the League of Arab States plan was in the interest of the Syrian people and not aimed at regime change. The Secretary-General said that the League of Arab States wanted to avoid any foreign intervention, especially military intervention. They also made reference to the report of the Head of the League of Arab States Observer Mission to the Syrian Arab Republic for the period 24 December 2011 to 18 January 2012. The representatives of the League of Arab States urged the members of the Council to support the draft resolution introduced by the representative of Morocco.

The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic made a statement in which he accused the League of Arab States of interfering in the Syrian Arab Republic's domestic affairs and thereby undermining its sovereignty. He rejected the League of Arab States plan. He also warned the Council not to act in a manner that would exacerbate the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic.

The members of the Council generally expressed concern about the grave situation in the Syrian Arab Republic and called on the parties to resolve their differences and engage in dialogue with a view to resolving the Syrian crisis in a peaceful manner. Some members called on the Syrian authorities to end the cycle of violence, while others underlined the need for all sides to end the violence. Council members also expressed their support for the League of Arab States efforts aimed at finding a peaceful solution to the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic. Some members called for those who had committed gross violations of human rights to be held accountable.

Thematic issues

Children and armed conflict

On 19 January, the Council held closed consultations on the situation of children and armed conflict, as called for in resolution 1998 (2011). The Council was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Radhika Coomaraswamy.

Members of the Council agreed that the situation of children and armed conflict was an important matter on the Council's agenda and expressed support for the work of the Special Representative. Some Council members were of the view that the Governments concerned should be consulted when gathering information, as the importance of verified and reliable information remained critical to producing acceptable reports, in particular to the concerned countries. Some members raised questions about the legal definition of "other situations of concern" (S/2011/250), which were defined as analogous to armed conflict, and stressed the need to work strictly within the approved mandate. There were divergent views among Council members on the application of the criteria, with some members questioning the discretion afforded to the Secretary-General with respect to documenting and condemning violations against children in armed conflict, while others supported his exercise of discretion while fulfilling his mandate. Some members objected to the Secretary-General's practice of listing in annex II of his annual report (ibid.) violators in situations not on the agenda of the Council. Other members expressed support for the annex II listings.

Non-proliferation

On 11 January a member of the Council raised the issue of the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran under the agenda item entitled "Other matters". Some members of the Council expressed concern that actions by the Islamic Republic of Iran to begin enriching uranium to a higher level violated resolutions of the Council. Those members of the Council called for the full implementation of Security Council sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran, for further pressure on the Islamic Republic of Iran to return to negotiations and for the release of the report of May 2011 of the Panel of Experts on the Islamic Republic of Iran. One member of the Council proposed that the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1737 (2006) consider a public meeting with all States Member of the United Nations to publicize the sanctions regime. Other members of the Council expressed the view that diplomatic efforts should be exercised to resolve the matter, called for the resumption of dialogue between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the five plus one group, and also called for the Council to be cautious and facilitate dialogue.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union

On 12 January 2012, the Council held a debate on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union. The Council was briefed by the Secretary-General, the Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kenya in his capacity as Chair of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.

The Secretary-General briefed the Council on his report on United Nations-African Union cooperation in peace and security (S/2011/805) and highlighted the important role that regional and subregional organizations continued to play in conflict prevention and resolution. He stated that the African Union was a vital strategic partner to the United Nations.

The Commissioner reiterated the importance of building a strong partnership between the United Nations and the African Union in an effort to promote peace, security and stability in Africa. The Minister for Foreign Affairs provided an

assessment of the relationship between the United Nations and the African Union at both the institutional and operational levels, and called for a more innovative interpretation of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

The President of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, presided over the meeting. In addition, the ministers for foreign affairs of Azerbaijan, Colombia and Guatemala; the Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office for Germany; the Minister of State responsible for French Nationals Abroad; the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Portugal; the special representative of China for African Affairs; and the Minister and Special Adviser to the President of Togo participated in the debate, as well as the representatives of all other members of the Council. Also participating in the debate were the Chairs of the Regional Economic Communities of the African Union, namely, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, represented by Kongit Sinegiorgis of Ethiopia, and the Economic Community of West African States, represented by Joy Ogwu of Nigeria.

Following the discussion, members of the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2033 (2012), in which it reaffirmed its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security; expressed its determination to take effective steps to further enhance the relationship between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, in particular the African Union; and reiterated the importance of establishing a more effective relationship between the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, including in the areas of conflict prevention, resolution and management, electoral assistance and regional conflict prevention offices. The issues relating to capacity-building, predictable and sustainable resources and mediation were underscored as critical areas of cooperation.

Rule of law

On 19 January, the Council held an open debate on the promotion and strengthening of the rule of law in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Secretary-General introduced his report on the rule of law and transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict societies (S/2011/634). Representatives of 42 Member States (including Council members) made statements during the debate.

At the same meeting, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2012/1), in which it recognized the need for universal adherence to and implementation of the rule of law and emphasized that promoting justice and the rule of law was an indispensable element for peaceful coexistence. In the statement, the Council reaffirmed its commitment to an international order based on the rule of law, and to the peaceful settlement of disputes, emphasizing the key role of the International Court of Justice.

The presidential statement also expressed the Council's concern over the devastation and suffering caused by armed conflict and emphasized the need to prevent conflict and, where conflict had broken out, to restore peace. The Council reaffirmed that sustainable peace required an integrated approach based on coherence between political, security, development, human rights and rule of law and justice activities. The Council recognized the importance of national ownership

in rule of law assistance activities and the need for enhanced efforts aimed at capacity-building.

The Council also reaffirmed its strong opposition to impunity for serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law and emphasized the responsibility of States to thoroughly investigate and prosecute persons responsible for violations. The Council also reiterated its call for State cooperation with the courts and ad hoc tribunals in accordance with their respective obligations.

Finally, in the statement the Council requested the Secretary-General to provide a follow-up report within 12 months to consider the effectiveness of the United Nations system's support to the promotion of the rule of law in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Subsidiary bodies

Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011)

On 30 January the Council received a report from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011), the Permanent Representative of Germany, Peter Wittig, on the work of the Committee. The briefing was the first since the establishment of the Committee following the adoption of resolution 1988 (2011) in June 2011.

The Chair updated members on the establishment of the Committee's guidelines and the trilateral cooperation between the Government of Afghanistan, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the Committee. The briefing also touched on the review of the sanctions list and ways for the Committee to enhance implementation of the sanctions regime. The Chair also indicated that the Committee was well prepared to support efforts by the Government of Afghanistan to foster reconciliation.

Council members expressed the need for the Committee to work in support of peace and national reconciliation in Afghanistan. Council members also agreed on the need for accountability, transparency and fairness in the work of the Committee. A variety of views were expressed on the Council's understanding of the linkages between Al-Qaida and the Taliban.

Other matters

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

On 6 January the members of the Council issued a statement to the press condemning in the strongest terms the terrorist attack that occurred in Damascus on 6 January 2012. Council members expressed their deep sympathy and sincere condolences to the victims of this heinous act and to their families, and to the people of the Syrian Arab Republic. The members of the Council reaffirmed that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security, and that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed.

On 25 January, the Council issued a statement to the press condemning in the strongest terms the multiple terrorist attacks that occurred in Kano, Nigeria. The members of the Council also expressed their deep sympathy and condolences to the victims of this heinous crime and to their families, and to the people and Government of Nigeria. The Council, inter alia, reaffirmed its views on terrorism and reiterated its determination to combat terrorism in accordance with its obligations under the Charter.

International Court of Justice

On 19 January the Council adopted, without a vote, resolution 2034 (2012), in which it decided that the election to fill the vacancy shall take place on 27 April 2012.